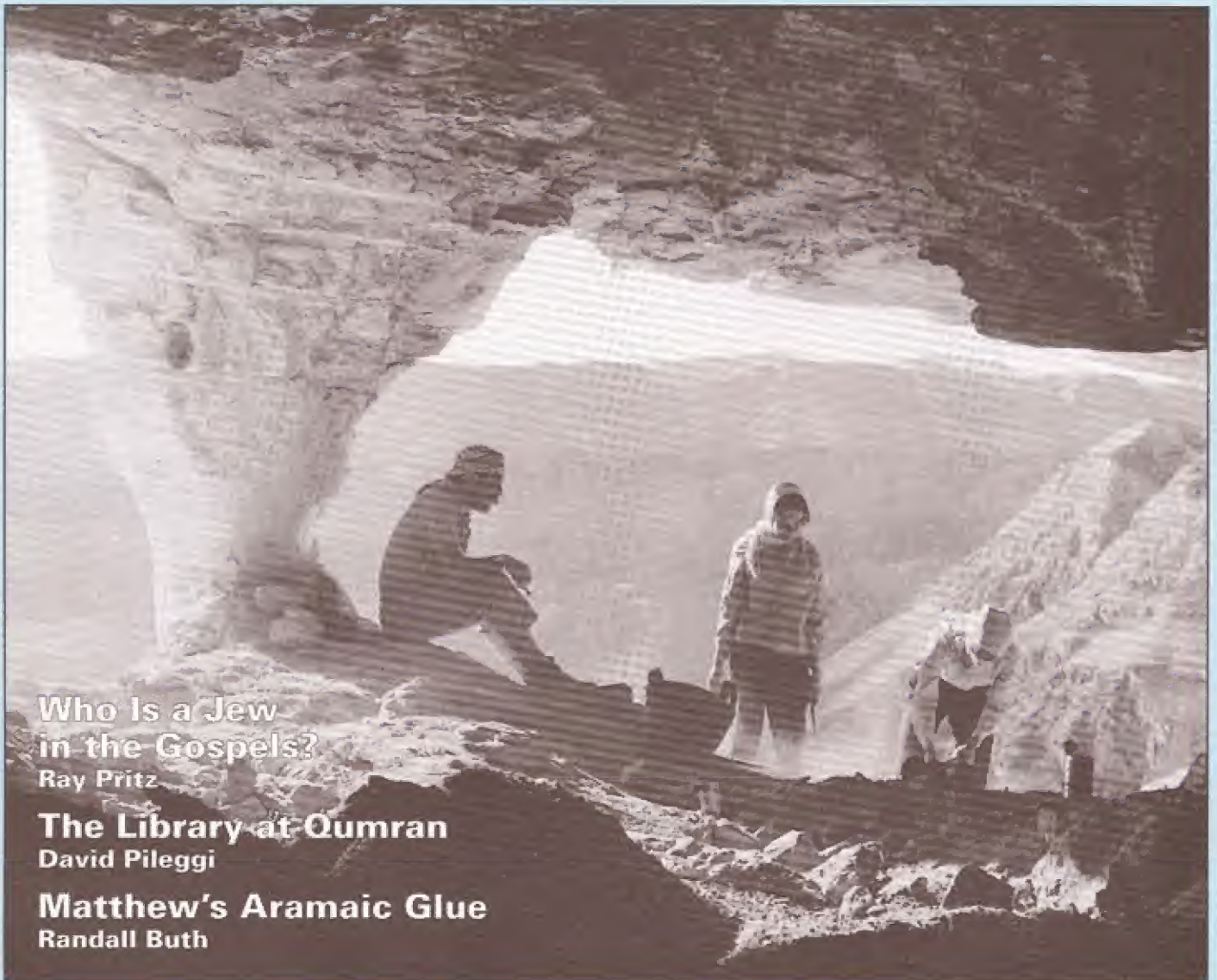


מנקודת ראות ירושלמית

Jerusalem Perspective

September/October 1990
Volume 3, Number 5



**Who Is a Jew
in the Gospels?**

Ray Pritz

The Library at Qumran

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A Bimonthly Report on Research into the Words of Jesus

Readers' Perspective



Your Jul/Aug 1989 issue had a nice article by R. Steven Notley entitled "By the Finger of God." I was reviewing his presentation and noticed it stated that the expression "finger of God" occurs only twice in Hebrew Scriptures. I respectfully submit that it is found three times — the third reference is in Deuteronomy 9:10.

Your articles and lessons are appreciated. I keep them all in a special notebook and refer back to them periodically.

— Ron Drown, Muncie, Indiana, U.S.A.

You are right. Thank you for taking the time to send us this correction. It is encouraging to know that our readers study the articles in *JP* carefully and check our references, and that they regularly review previous articles.

— Ed.

I am a born-again Christian and love the Lord very much, so I want to do as the Lord would have me. I am confused concerning what day I should hold as the Sabbath — Saturday or Sunday? Which day did the first Christians hold?

— K. M. Kramer, Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada

The Hebrew word שַׁבָּת (*sha-BAT*, Sabbath) comes from a root meaning "to rest" or "to cease." It is first used in the Bible in Genesis 2:2-3, in its verb form, to describe God resting or ceasing from his creative

activity on the seventh day. Throughout Hebrew Scripture the seventh day is referred to as the day of rest, but it is never designated as a day for meetings.

By Jesus' time the synagogue had become an established institution, and we know from the Gospels that Jesus regularly went to synagogue on the Sabbath and was even called upon to participate in the service. Paul also frequently was in the synagogue on the seventh day, "as was his custom" (Acts 17:2). However, no passage proves definitively that either Jesus or Paul attended the synagogue on a weekday, and it seems that daily services had not yet been instituted at that time (see Shmuel Safrai's "Synagogue and Sabbath," *JP*, Nov/Dec 1989).

There is little evidence in the New Testament to support the practice of Christians meeting on Sunday. Paul met with the church at Troas on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), and we are told that they were gathered together to break bread — which may mean a communion (compare I Cor. 10:16; 11:24) — and that Paul preached a long sermon.

There are some things in this story that are not clear. First of all, we are not told here or elsewhere in the New Testament that this was a regular day for meetings. Paul was leaving the next day, and this may simply have been his last opportunity to meet before his departure.

Nor is it entirely clear which day this was. The meeting was at night, and calling it "the first day of the week" could mean, by Jewish reckoning, after

(continued on page 15)

Jerusalem Perspective

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*Cover photo:
The Cave of Letters
in the Judean
Desert, where the
Bar-Kochba letters
and other impor-
tant manuscripts
were found.*

(Courtesy of the Israel
Government Press Office)

The New Testament in Modern Hebrew

In this series Dr. Ray Pritz, head of the Bible Society in Israel, describes the challenges faced by the Society's translation committee in rendering the synoptic Gospels into modern Hebrew, and some of the solutions it found.

by Ray Pritz

Vernacular Hebrew was resurrected in Israel at the beginning of this century, primarily through the efforts of Eliezer Ben Yehuda. While modern Hebrew uses the same alphabet (or *'A-lef-bet*) and basic vocabulary as Biblical Hebrew, it is a hybrid of old and new.

On the one hand, for example, an Israeli would very naturally say of someone who hesitates to make a decision that he *פוסט על שתי הסעפים* (*po-SE-ah 'al shte ha-se'i-PIM*, hops on two branches), without being fully aware that he is quoting the prophet Elijah (I Kings 18:21). On the other hand, modern Hebrew contains many words borrowed or adapted from European languages, for example *טלפון* (*TE-le-phon*, telephone).

An Israeli with a high school education is able to read most of the Bible in the original Hebrew with complete understanding. In fact, that is the only Hebrew version which exists today, as a modern Hebrew version of the Hebrew Scriptures has yet to be attempted. Israeli children learn their *'A-lef-bet* in the first grade, and in the second grade they read the entire book of Genesis in the original Hebrew with a high degree of comprehension. In Jewish religious schools today, as in Jesus' time, boys learn to read the Bible at age five, beginning with the book of Leviticus.

Jesus' Words in Hebrew

When an Israeli reads the words of Jesus in Hebrew, he starts out with an advantage over someone reading in another language. While the Hebrew version is still a translation, the Greek text from which the Hebrew

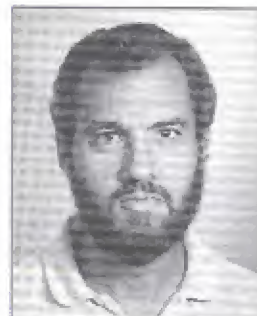
is translated is full of Hebraisms which are inherently more comprehensible to the Hebrew-speaker.

Perhaps I can illustrate what I mean with an example. On a visit to Japan, the widow of John Steinbeck was greeted by an admirer who told her he loved her husband's books, especially *The Angry Raisins*. If a person who heard this comment were familiar with American literature, he would have no trouble restoring the proper title, *The Grapes of Wrath*. His success would have been due to his knowledge of the literary background as well as the language of the original.

Hebraisms in the Greek Gospels exist in part because at least some of Jesus' recorded sayings were originally spoken in Hebrew. No matter what language the original biography of Jesus was written in, the words of Jesus as we read them in Greek are a translation. The Greek has preserved a good deal of the original Semitic flavor of Jesus' words, and in many cases has even conveyed word-for-word renderings of Hebrew idioms which make little sense in Greek or any other non-Semitic language. When translated to Hebrew, these idioms make sense and sound natural. The person whose mother-tongue is Hebrew is likely to be the only one who will easily grasp the full meaning without extra help in the form of footnotes or commentaries.

Bible Society in Israel

The Bible Society in Israel, which will celebrate its 175th anniversary in 1991, was the first group in Israel to print a full Bible (both Testaments) in Hebrew. Like all members of the United Bible Societies, the



Ray Pritz received his M.A. and Ph.D. from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he also lectured for three years. His doctoral dissertation, entitled *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, was published by Magnes Press, the publishing house of the Hebrew University.

Bible Society in Israel is a non-denominational, Christian organization dedicated to making the Scriptures available to people in a language they can understand and at a price they can afford. In Israel this means working with Hebrew and Arabic.

In 1969, the Bible Society in Israel began preparing the first translation of the New Testament into modern Hebrew. A basic text was prepared by an Israeli translator, and this was closely checked by a committee of local scholars who were qualified in both Greek and Hebrew. Members of the translation committee included Jerusalem School scholars Dr. Robert Lindsey and Halvor and Mirja Ronning.

Hebrew New Testaments

The New Testament had been translated into Hebrew over ninety times in the past several centuries. The most famous pre-modern-Hebrew translation was completed in 1877 (four years before Ben Yehuda

immigrated to Palestine) by Franz Delitzsch, a German scholar of Jewish descent. He used his extensive knowledge of Biblical and post-Biblical Hebrew to produce a translation

in the kind of Hebrew that developed after the period of the Hebrew Scriptures. This translation went through a number of revisions both during and after Delitzsch's lifetime, and until recently was the most widely used Hebrew version of the New Testament.

The Bible Society published its modern-Hebrew version of the New Testament in 1976, and it has gradually replaced the Delitzsch version. Many phrases that Delitzsch reconstructed in his translation were current in Jesus' time, but today's Hebrew-speaker benefits from them only if he is a student of his own language, or if those phrases still have the same meaning in modern Hebrew. The Bible Society's Hebrew translation opted for understandable current Hebrew at the expense of preserving archaic original phrases. The modern translators had an advantage over Delitzsch in that they not only knew the Greek and old Hebrew as he did, but also the evolved Hebrew used by today's readers.

Because Delitzsch translated before Hebrew was reborn, some of his renderings are obscure or even misleading. Delitzsch

could not have known, for example, that the word he used to describe the Messiah in Hebrews 8:6, *קָדְשׁוֹר* (*sar-SUR*, mediator), would become the modern Hebrew word for gigolo or pimp. The translators of the modern Hebrew version frequently were able to preserve phrases close to Jesus' original words while staying within the boundaries of language that carries the same meaning today.

The modern Hebrew-speaker probably encounters far fewer sayings of Jesus that he would consider difficult than does his contemporary reading the New Testament in another language. But no translation, however good, can transmit the original meaning in its entirety. Even in Hebrew renditions of Jesus' words, it sometimes is necessary to explain something in a footnote.

Annotated Edition

Soon after the Bible Society's Hebrew New Testament was published, Israeli readers began to express their need for an edition with notes giving background information. This project was begun in 1980. Suggestions for notes were received from all over Israel as well as from abroad, and a committee of local scholars worked for almost eight years to edit the notes, book introductions, glossary and other material.

This annotated edition of the New Testament, which is to appear in early 1991, is different from most study editions in that it makes frequent references to rabbinic parallels to New Testament sayings and events.

The Bible Society in Israel has produced trial translations of several portions of the Hebrew Scriptures into modern Hebrew, and has published an edition of the Peshitta (Aramaic) New Testament in Hebrew letters with a translation in modern Hebrew on facing pages. It is now working on an edition of the Bible in Hebrew and Russian for new immigrants to Israel. **JP**

Readers can obtain a copy of the modern Hebrew New Testament or the full Bible in Hebrew by contacting their local Bible Society and ordering "Modern Hebrew New Testament, M262" or "Hebrew Bible, SD73." Prices will vary from country to country. Also available is a fifteen-cassette set of recordings of the complete modern Hebrew New Testament.

**Today's Hebrew
is rich with idioms
from the Bible.**

Who Is a Jew in the Gospels?

Most English translations consistently translate the Greek word Ἰουδαῖοι (*Ioudaioi*) as “Jews.” But this inflexible translation has often contributed to an anti-Semitic interpretation of the New Testament.

by Ray Pritz

The Bible Society's modern Hebrew translation of the New Testament has not automatically translated *Ioudaioi* as יְהוּדִים (*ye-hu-DIM*, Jews) in every case. It has taken into account both the internal context in which *Ioudaioi* occurs and the external context in which the New Testament was written.

Roots of Judah

Judah (יְהוּדָה, *ye-hu-DAH*) comes from a root meaning to praise, thank, or sometimes confess, and was the name of Jacob's fourth son. Judah's mother Leah gave him that name because, she said, “this time I will praise the Lord” (Gen. 29:35).

The family of Judah was allotted a portion of land when the Israelites crossed over into Canaan, and that allotment was also called Judah. The Greek form of the place name is Ἰουδαία (*Ioudaia*), which we know in its Latinized form of Judea. A person who came from that area became known in Hebrew as a יְהוּדִי (*ye-hu-DI*), the plural of which is יְהוּדִים (*ye-hu-DIM*). The Greek transliterations of these words are Ἰουδαῖος (*Ioudaios*) and Ἰουδαῖοι (*Ioudaioi*). At the simplest level, then, a person from *Ioudaia* is an *Ioudaios*.

The word *Ioudaios/Ioudaioi* occurs in the Gospels eighty-eight times, and in all of the New Testament almost 200 times. The frequency of usage in each of the four Gospels is instructive: Matthew five times, Mark seven times, Luke five times, John seventy-one times. Apparently John, who was dealing with the same basic events, the same people and the same time period, must have been using the word differently from the other evangelists.

Geographical Distinctions

There were recognized geographical distinctions in the Land of Israel. People from the Galilee were called Galileans by those from the south, who were called Judeans by their northern brothers. By the time of the New Testament, however, not only were the Jewish people living all over the Land of Israel, but the great majority of them were scattered throughout the Mediterranean lands and eastward into Persia. In these lands they were generally known as *Ioudaioi* or its local equivalent, and even in Israel the Roman authorities and other foreigners tended to call them by this more inclusive name.

It is significant that John was writing his Gospel outside the Land of Israel. Geographical distinctions often lose their meaning when the speaker is removed from the immediate vicinity. We might imagine, for example, a Mississippi-born American ambassador to a Latin American country finding the words “Yankee Go Home” painted on the wall of his house. Inside the U.S.A. no one would call him a Yankee, but outside the country the usage is completely understandable. John was aware of the geographical distinction between Galilee and Judea and sometimes made that distinction himself, but he could also use *Ioudaioi* in its more inclusive sense.

In John 7:1 we read that Jesus was staying in Galilee; he chose not to go into *Ioudaia* (Judea) because the *Ioudaioi* were trying to kill him. How should we translate the word *Ioudaioi* in this verse? The distinction made in the text is between the Galilean region inhabited by Galilean Jews, and the Judean region inhabited by Judean Jews. Our translations should maintain this distinction and say something like,

"He did not want to go into Judea because the Judeans were looking to kill him."

Similarly we have what appears to be a geographically-rooted use of the word in John 11:7–8. "Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let us return to *Ioudaia*.' The disciples said, 'Rabbi, not long ago the *Ioudaioi* tried to stone you, and you're going back there?'" Here again the context demands that we translate (actually transliterate) "Judeans." Unfortunately most English translations — with the exceptions of *Today's English Version* and *The Living Bible* — have used the word "Jews" here.

Collective Usage

Another usage of the word *Ioudaioi*, particularly in the Gospel of John, is as a reference to certain Jewish religious leaders. It is a common linguistic practice to use the name of a whole people when speaking of a few of its representatives. Thus, for example, we would say, "The Russians beat the Americans in ice hockey." No one would suppose that 260 million Russians and 240 million Americans went onto the ice.

In the same way the New Testament, and especially the Gospel of John, often uses the word *Ioudaioi* to refer to a few people in leadership or their representatives. In John 1:19 we read that "the *Ioudaioi*" sent some priests and Levites to question John the Baptist. Verse 24 clarifies that "they had been sent from the Pharisees."

One of the few instances in which Jesus himself actually uses the word is found in John 13:33: "...as I said to the *Ioudaioi*, 'Where I am going you cannot come.'"

However, we find in John 7:30–34 that he was speaking to officers who had been sent by chief priests and Pharisees.

Responsible Translation

The good translator is not just a person who has learned Greek grammar and can use a dictionary. Responsible translation demands working with the text in the framework in which it was written.

In this case, for example, we should recall several historical factors which will have influenced John's use of language. John wrote his Gospel near the end of the first century in the area of Asia Minor, well outside the Land of Israel. By the time he wrote, the Temple had been destroyed and much of the social structure of the Jewish people in the Land had been radically changed from what it had been in Jesus' time. Most of the sects and parties that had been active at the start of the century no longer existed, and the only significant groups to still maintain their identity were the Pharisees and John's fellow believers in Jesus.

Writing at the end of the century and for a mostly non-Jewish audience outside the Land of Israel, John could quite naturally use *Ioudaioi* and Pharisees interchangeably. JP

If King David were alive today, could he communicate with President Herzog?

How hard would it be for a speaker of modern Hebrew to understand someone speaking Biblical Hebrew? If King David returned, would he be able to understand modern Israel's President Herzog, and would Herzog be able to understand him? Would Jesus be able to communicate with modern Israelis?

Hebrew was not a spoken language for almost 1800 years, and therefore did not undergo the sorts of changes seen in other languages. As a result, modern and ancient Hebrew are quite similar. There is less difference between modern Hebrew and the Hebrew of King David than between, for instance, modern American English and the English of Shakespeare.

There still would be some communication problems, though. The speaker of Biblical Hebrew and the speaker of modern Hebrew would have trouble understanding each other's pronunciation, and the ancient speaker

would be at a loss to understand modern words coined to describe the technology of the twentieth century. Modern Hebrew words such as אוטובוס (*O-to-bus*, bus), טלוויזיה (*te-le-VIZ-yah*, television) and אנטנה (*an-TE-nah*, antenna) would mean nothing to him. However, could they meet, the king of ancient Israel and the president of the modern state would quickly be able to overcome these dialectical differences and communicate freely.

Jesus would have even less difficulty than King David in communicating with today's Israelis. Although all of the Bible's vocabulary was used in creating modern Hebrew, the word order and syntax of modern Hebrew is based on the rabbinic Hebrew Jesus would have spoken. In Biblical Hebrew, for example, the verb precedes the subject of the sentence, while in the Hebrew of Jesus' time, as in modern Hebrew, the sentence order is subject–verb.

– David Bivin

The Library at Qumran

Forty-three years ago two Bedouin shepherds of the Ta'amra tribe found the first of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Their discovery created an exciting new area of biblical research.

by David Pileggi

While searching up a hill for a strayed goat, Mohammed edh Dhib and Ahmed Mohammed noticed a small hole in the rock face. Their curiosity was particularly aroused when one of them threw a rock into the hole and heard it smash into a pottery jar inside. Returning the next day, they crawled into the cave and discovered eight large jars lining the walls. All but two of the jars were empty — one was filled with earth while the other contained one large scroll and two smaller ones.

What Mohammed and Ahmed found was the now famous complete Isaiah Scroll, the Manual of Discipline and the Habakkuk Commentary. The shepherds took the three scrolls back to their camp southeast of Bethlehem, where the manuscripts were kept in a bag hanging from a tent pole for at least three months.

Eventually the scrolls were turned over to a merchant in Bethlehem known as Kando. He brought them to the leaders of his church at the Syrian Orthodox Monastery of Saint Mark's in Jerusalem for help in identifying the manuscripts. Before revealing the secret of where the scrolls were found, Kando organized an unofficial expedition to the shepherds' cave (later designated as Cave I), where he found another four scrolls and fragments of some seventy other works. The church later carried out its own search of the area for more manuscripts.

Despite the race to find new documents, no one was quite sure what the scrolls were or who had written them. The church officials consulted various scholars in Jerusalem, and word began to leak out about the mysterious Hebrew texts. The intrigue and negotia-

tions surrounding the Qumran library went on in the midst of the Arab-Israeli war of 1947–1949.

The first scholar to recognize the antiquity of the scrolls was Hebrew University professor E.L. Sukenik — the father of Yigael Yadin — who succeeded in obtaining for the Hebrew University three of the manuscripts from Kando. Four other scrolls from Cave I were bought by Yadin in 1954 after his father's death. By this time the Syrian Orthodox church had smuggled them out of the country to the United States, and negotiated their sale to the Hebrew University for \$250,000. Seven years earlier the church had purchased the same scrolls from Kando for \$97.20.

But that was only the beginning of the story. After the end of the first round of Arab-Jewish hostilities, members of the Ta'amra tribe scoured the thousands of caves near Qumran and the shores of the Dead Sea for ancient scrolls. Their efforts bore fruit. The Bedouin or their agent, Kando, provided scholars in Jerusalem with a steady flow of documents and other archaeological finds. In one cave alone (Cave IV) the Ta'amra "archaeologists" recovered tens of thousands of scroll fragments. The

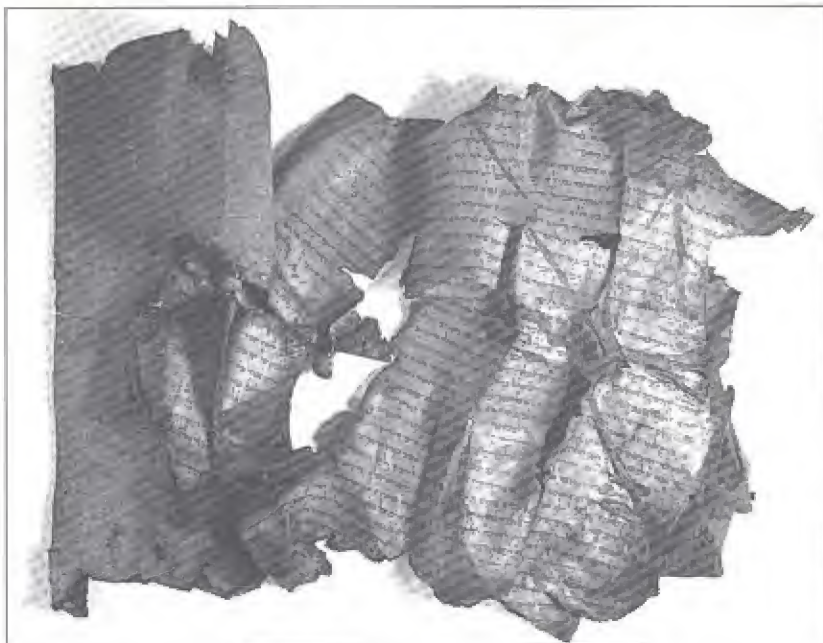


David Pileggi, Contributing Editor of JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE, is a free-lance journalist who has lived in Israel for nine years.

An assortment of ancient inkwells, from left to right: bronze (from Beth Shean), pottery (Jerusalem), wood (Qumran) and pottery (Qumran).

(Courtesy of the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums. Photo: David Harris)





Second sheet of the Thanksgiving Scroll. Much of the scroll's deterioration occurred after it was removed from its jar in Qumran Cave I and brought to the much damper Bethlehem-Jerusalem area, where it was passed from hand to hand.

(Courtesy of the Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum)

Bedouin were responsible for recovering from eleven caves in the Qumran area the largest part of what is considered the most important ancient manuscript discovery.

Restoration

Most of the Qumran documents were written on parchment, with only a few of the texts written on papyrus. Parchment is more durable than papyrus and withstood the ravages of time better. Although made from animal skins, parchment is technically different from leather. Instead of being tanned, it was dressed with alum and dusted with sifted chalk. Then the single sheets of parchment were sown together to form a scroll, in the same way that modern Torah scrolls are made.

The manuscripts were copied in two kinds of ink: a standard type and a kind made with a metallic additive. The latter badly corroded parchment, and the Qumran documents written with this type of ink often have almost nothing left of the area where the lines of text once were. In one case red ink was used on a copy of Exodus to draw the lines for writing and mark the headings of the various sections.

Very few of the manuscript finds at Qumran were more than fragments, and these tiny scraps of parchment had to be painstakingly pieced back together. Before that difficult process could begin, the brittle fragments had to be cleaned of dirt and dust, and then humidified. Damaged bits of manuscript had to be repaired and reinforced before being handled. After this

process, all fragments were flattened and photographed. Many of the pieces arrived at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem in an unreadable state, and infrared photography was essential in deciphering the text.

Then each tiny fragment had to be identified. A scholar can spend hours studying each scrap before determining whether it is biblical or part of the Qumran sect's own writings. The scholar often is handicapped by the fact that worms have eaten away the edges of his puzzle pieces, and he must rely on a knowledge of ancient texts and an ability to recognize the idiosyncrasies of the different scribes to piece fragments of a manuscript together.

The process is long and slow, which is one of the reasons it is taking so long to decipher and publish all the material from the Essene library. To date about seventy-five percent of the material has been published.

Remarkable Discoveries

One of the most surprising discoveries was a unique, inscribed copper scroll, eight feet long by eleven inches wide, which was discovered in two parts in Cave III in 1952. Initial attempts to open the scroll caused the oxidized metal to crumble into dust, and it took four years before a way was found to open it. In the end it was cut into twenty-three strips and reassembled. Inside was an inventory of buried treasure: gold, silver and vessels used in the Temple, apparently hidden by the defenders of Jerusalem before they were overwhelmed by the Romans in 70 A.D. Written in Mishnaic Hebrew, the scroll describes the places in and around Jerusalem where the treasure can be recovered.

The opening of the copper scroll initially created a great deal of excitement and the public, not to mention some scholars, had visions of unearthing tons of biblical treasure. But alas, the descriptions proved too vague to be of any real value. However they were useful in throwing new light on the topography of Jerusalem and the linguistic situation during the New Testament period.

Questions on how the scroll came to find a place in the Qumran library have never completely been resolved. John Allegro, in his book *The Treasure of the Copper Scroll* (New York: Doubleday, 1960), suggests that the Zealots may have given the scroll to their allies at Qumran for safekeeping.

The copper scroll aside, manuscripts

found at Qumran can be divided into biblical texts and sectarian literature. The biblical manuscripts span three centuries, and a few of the more archaic can be dated to the close of the third century B.C. However, most of the biblical scrolls are believed to have been copied in the first centuries B.C.–A.D.

Fragments of every biblical book with the exception of Esther have been found at Qumran. The Essenes used the Bible in their daily prayers and study, so it is not surprising that many copies of biblical books were recovered from their library. Judging by the number of copies found at Qumran, Deuteronomy was the most popular portion of the Bible, as indeed it was throughout Israel at that time.

Prophetic Commentaries

In addition to books of the Hebrew canon, portions of works from the Septuagint such as Tobit (in Aramaic and Hebrew) and Ecclesiasticus or Ben Sira (in Hebrew), and apocryphal books such as Jubilees (in Hebrew), Enoch (in Aramaic), Testament of Levi (in Aramaic) and Testament of Naphtali (in Hebrew) have been found. Along with this material came a number of commentaries on the Psalms and the Prophets.

The Habakkuk Commentary illustrates how the community used biblical texts. The commentator would reveal what was called the “hidden meaning” of a particular verse and apply it to events past, present, or future. For example, when Habakkuk warns of the vicious military might of the Chaldeans in the seventh century B.C., the Qumran commentators interpreted this to mean the activities of Romans of their day. All Bible prophecy was thought to be referring to the “end of days,” and the Qumran sect believed those “last days” were just around the corner. Some scholars think the exegesis found in the Dead Sea commentaries was developed by the sect’s founder, the Teacher of Righteousness.

Other writings by the sect were found at Qumran, one of the most important of which was the three-part *סדרים* (*se-ra-KIM*, orders). The first part is the Order of the Community, better known as the Manual of Discipline, in which the strict rules of

the community are spelled out. Part two consists of The Order of the Whole Congregation of Israel at the End of Days, the ideal constitution for the messianic age. Finally comes the Order of Blessings, which contains formulas for the exchange of greetings between members of the community.

Next in order of importance of the sectarian scrolls is the War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness. Much of the text reads like a military handbook with sections dealing with strategy and unit formations. But the war it describes is an apocalyptic battle between members of the Essene community — the sons of light — and all the enemies of the sect such as the Romans and the Jerusalem priesthood — the sons of darkness. According to the manuscript, the war was supposed to last forty years, with the sons of light of course expected to be victorious.

One of the great treasures from Qumran is the Temple Scroll. At over twenty-six feet in length, it is the longest of all the Qumran scrolls. It is written in the first person and reads as if it was dictated by God, detailing laws concerning ritual purity, Temple worship and construction.

As the remaining fragments are pieced together by a team of scholars, new revelations are still coming to light. Forty-three years after the Bedouin shepherds made their amazing discovery in Qumran, the Dead Sea Scrolls are still enlightening scholars and changing our understanding of the period in which Jesus lived. **JP**

Two fragments of the Targum of Job discovered in Qumran Cave XI. Each fragment is approximately 6 cm. wide. Notice the deterioration around the edges of the fragments. Dampness and vermin have damaged all the Qumran scrolls to some extent.

(Courtesy of the Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum)



Matthew's Aramaic Glue



Randall Buth received his doctorate from U.C.L.A. in the field of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures. Dr. Buth is a member of the Jerusalem School, and a translator and consultant with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Africa.

מְתוּרְגֵּמָן (*me-tur-ge-MAN*) is Hebrew for translator. The articles in this series illustrate how a knowledge of the Gospels' Semitic background can provide a deeper understanding of Jesus' words and influence the translation process.

by Randall Buth

A translator must understand and interpret all the linguistic signals in his source, and use those signals in a way that is both natural in the target language and congruent to the original text. Every language has particular ways of putting a story together, and the more a translator knows about each language's construction system, the better translation he will provide.

In Hebrew events are joined together by וְ (*ve-*, and), while in English we generally prefer not to have a conjunction. Hebrew also carefully distinguishes word order to signal the structure of the story. This can be very significant for a translator, and for Gospel research.

Knowledge of the different ways of joining stories in Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic can help us understand the history and relationships of the synoptic Gospels. The three synoptic writers use different linguistic methods to glue their stories together. None of these is purely Greek, and all show Semitic influence. Matthew shows a specifically Aramaic influence, and in this article we will see how he uses an Aramaic conjunction as the glue to hold stories together.

"Then" in the Hebrew Bible

Although the vast majority of the Hebrew Bible was written in Hebrew, ten chapters — Daniel 2:4–7:28, Ezra 4:8–6:18 and 7:12–26 — were written in Aramaic. This language is very closely related to Hebrew, rather like the relationship between French and Spanish or German and Dutch.

The Aramaic chapters in the Bible are

notable for their frequent use of $\text{וְתָּ$ (*'e-DA-yin*, then). As mentioned above, Hebrew often uses the prefix וְ (*ve-*, and) to link sentences in a story, but only rarely does it use וְתָּ (*'az*, then) in a narrative — forty-three times in about 410 narrative chapters. The Aramaic chapters use "then" about sixty times more frequently than Hebrew, making the use of "then" one of the major distinguishing features between Aramaic and Hebrew narrative.

(For a discussion of the reasons for this difference between Aramaic and Hebrew, see my article "*Edayin / Tote — Anatomy of a Semitism in Jewish Greek*," *Maarav* 5–6 (1990), pp. 33–48. Later on during the Second Temple period the frequency of "then" in Aramaic became more restricted, but it was still about ten times more frequent than in Hebrew narrative.)

To help us in studying the Gospels, we need to know if this distinction between Hebrew and Aramaic would show up in Greek translations of Hebrew and Aramaic texts. The answer is yes. The Septuagint almost always uses τότε (*tote*, then, at that time) to translate the Aramaic וְתָּ (*'e-DA-yin*) or Hebrew וְתָּ (*'az*).

Although *'e-DA-yin* and *'az* are frequently used to begin sentences in Aramaic and Hebrew, *tote* is not a common way to begin a Greek sentence. It therefore is doubly significant that *tote* is used frequently to begin sentences in one of the Gospels. It is evidence of non-Greek influence, and it points specifically to Aramaic.

"Then" in the Gospels

Neither Mark nor Luke show any significant evidence of the Aramaic narra-

tive system of conjunctions. Although they both use *tote* in non-narrative speeches in their Gospels, Mark never uses *tote* as a narrative conjunction, and it is used only three times in all of Luke.

Matthew is a different case in this regard. There are over fifty examples of *tote* in his narrative framework, and about ninety occurrences of the word in the whole book. This is very close to the kind of Aramaic found in the Genesis Apocryphon of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Matthew may have been written in Greek, but the linguistic use of the conjunction *tote* points dramatically to Aramaic influence.

None of the examples of narrative *tote* in Matthew occur in a parallel passage in Mark or Luke, even though many of the same contexts and clauses do have a parallel. Mark and Luke usually use *kai* (*kai*, and) or *de* (*de*, and; but) parallel to Matthew's narrative *tote*.

It should be pointed out that Mark and Luke did not avoid the word *tote* altogether. There are non-narrative parallels where all three Gospels agree word for word, including: Mt. 9:15=Mk. 2:20=Lk. 5:35 and Mt. 24:16=Mk. 13:14=Lk. 21:21. Likewise, there are agreements between only Matthew and Mark: Mt. 12:29=Mk. 3:27 and Mt. 24:23=Mk. 13:21; and also between Matthew and Luke: Mt. 7:5=Lk. 6:42 and Mt. 12:45=Lk. 11:26; and between Mark and Luke: Mk. 13:26=Lk. 21:27. But all of these agreements are within speech material and in future-tense contexts that could fit Hebrew as well as Aramaic; none of them are found in narrative contexts.

Synoptic Theory

This pattern of the use of *tote* demands explanation and must be dealt with in any synoptic theory. Although a Greek word, it occurs in Matthew with the frequency of the Aramaic ܬܘܬܐ-*DA-yin*. The fact that it occurs as a conjunction enhances its significance because it is the kind of word a writer does not concentrate upon. A writer thinks about some events and then unconsciously supplies the conjunctions that express whatever relationship he is assuming. Consider how you might use "and," "but" or "so" in English — probably without much thought about the word itself. Instead you concentrate on the major content.

Narrative *tote* occurs in different kinds of material in Matthew: in contexts that have no parallel in Mark and Luke; in contexts where both Mark and Luke are parallel, but

without *tote*; and in contexts where either Mark or Luke is parallel, but without *tote*. Where did this Aramaic narrative device come from? The simplest conclusion is that Matthew is responsible for introducing it.

If Matthew were the first Gospel and used by Mark and Luke, then scholars would have to explain why the writers of those later two Gospels ignored every instance of narrative *tote* in Matthew. One possible answer is that they wanted to get rid of a particular feature that sounded like bad Greek to them. However that does not explain why Luke went ahead and used narrative *tote* in other places (Lk. 14:21, 21:10 and 24:45) where Matthew is not parallel. If Luke used Matthew, and if Luke was able to accept narrative *tote* in his text, then almost certainly he would have kept at least one of Matthew's numerous narrative *totes*.

Mark's style also would be difficult to explain — he has so many *kais* (ands) that his Greek text sounds very Hebraized. If Matthew were used by Mark, then we would have to believe that a Greek writer (Mark) removed all traces of an Aramaic conjunction from his source, but left some examples of the same word in non-narrative contexts, and then proceeded to add so many *kais* to the narrative that his Greek sounded like an overly literal translation from Hebrew. Although it is possible that a writer could do that, it is not likely.

It is more probable that Matthew was trained to write Aramaic — as civil servants, for instance, had been trained for over five centuries — and that he wrote Greek with similar features and style. Matthew could take Mark or Luke or a source behind them and unconsciously overlay the Aramaic-colored conjunction system one finds in Matthew's Gospel. This would explain why narrative *tote* occurs so frequently throughout his Gospel.

Significance for Translation

Translators and exegetes find it useful in understanding a passage to know that an author has rewritten a particular source. It is helpful to know whether Matthew used

Matthew may have been written in Greek, but the linguistic use of the conjunction *tote* points dramatically to Aramaic influence.

Mark or Mark used Matthew. Most scholars have concluded that Matthew used Mark, whether according to the theory of Markan priority or Lukan priority. Because the conclusions from my examination of *tote* agree with generally accepted conclusions, this study will not change most interpretations. However, there still remains the question of *tote* itself.

How does *tote* function in Matthew?

Knowing that it derives from Aramaic helps us when looking at the relationships among the Gospels, but it does not yet tell us what it meant for Matthew. Why did he use it in the places that he did?

One context in which Matthew used *tote* is at the beginning of a new unit such as a paragraph. Matthew frequently used *tote* when a new character, location or a time gap occurs within a narrative. Examples are found in Matthew 3:5 and 3:13 where "people" and "Jesus" enter the respective contexts, and Matthew 4:1 and 4:5 where the location changes during the Baptism-Temptation narrative.

Matthew also used *tote* when there is no change in location or general time frame. In this context *tote* takes on a special meaning and implies that an important event is taking place. Often, this can be thought of as a mini-climax or conclusion to the paragraph. We find this special usage at Matthew 3:15

where John consents to baptize Jesus, Matthew 4:10 where Jesus gives his final answer to the devil, and Matthew 4:11 where the devil leaves.

In order to distinguish the normal *tote* from the special emphatic *tote* the translator must pay attention to whether the setting of the story is changing. If it remains the same, then *tote* marks an important event.

Concluding Comment

A good translator will choose various appropriate English words and phrases for *tote* in different contexts. He may use "so," "then," "at that time," "now," or sometimes nothing at all. But in every case, a translator must first understand the function of *tote* in Matthew's Greek text before he can proceed to his translation.

Not only does *tote* help show us how Matthew organized and joined together different events, it is also a very important word for understanding the linguistic background to the Gospels. One of the pieces of the synoptic puzzle is that Matthew reflects a distinctly Aramaic influence on his conjunctions, while Mark and Luke just as distinctly do not. It appears that this Aramaic influence in Matthew comes from himself, not from a source, and that he followed Luke and Mark in time. **JP**

Book Review

A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period by Michael Sokoloff. Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1990. 823 pp., \$99.00.

From the third to the seventh century A.D., the Jews of Palestine used Aramaic as their primary spoken and written language. This dialect has been of considerable interest to Christian scholars, and some have argued that it is the closest dialect to the Aramaic which Jesus would have spoken.

Hebrew was used in the first century both in a colloquial form, close to what is found in the Mishnah, as well as in a literary form, close to what is found in the Hebrew documents discovered at Qumran. There is some evidence to suggest that Aramaic was also used with two different "registers," a literary dialect and a colloquial dialect. The colloquial Aramaic dialect is probably best represented in the Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (JPA) of the Palestinian Talmud and Midrashic stories. Whether Jesus taught mainly in Hebrew or in Aramaic, the dialect of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic recorded in post-Mishnaic sources is a major cultural and linguistic storehouse for our knowledge of New Testament times.

Prof. Sokoloff's *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* limits itself to the best and most reliable sources of JPA, and thus has excluded Targums Onkelos, Jonathan and Pseudo-Jonathan. Sokoloff felt it would be better to rely only on definite Palestinian Targums like Targum Neofiti

and the fragmentary Jerusalem Targums. Along with these, the base texts for the dictionary include some inscriptions from the period, the Amoraic haggadic midrashim, the Palestinian Talmud, all known poetry from the period, amulet-charm texts and marriage documents. For each document that is included in the corpus of JPA, Sokoloff bases all his research and his working concordance on the best manuscripts rather than the printed editions. This alone makes his dictionary a must for any Aramaic scholar.

The previous standard dictionary was by Morris Jastow, who grouped Mishnaic Hebrew and three separate dialects of Aramaic into the same dictionary. Very often a scholar using this dictionary would not know if a particular word or meaning was found in specifically Palestinian Aramaic. If the word is not listed in Sokoloff's dictionary, it is not attested in the best sources for JPA.

The individual word entries are alphabetical for nouns and alphabetical by root for verbs. Vowel points are added only when there is textual support for them, which usually means words from some of the Palestinian Targum manuscripts. A simple English gloss is given at the beginning of each entry. Cognate words from Samaritan Aramaic and Christian Palestinian Aramaic are cited. Syriac forms with vowels are cited from Carl Brockelmann's *Syrische Grammatik*, though not exhaustively, and other Semitic cognates are more randomly cited. Greek loan words are also cited. Many citations are given with some context

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תַּנ"ךְ – ta·NAK

Lesson 25

by David Bivin

The word generally used in Hebrew for what Christians call the “Old Testament” is תַּנ"ךְ (ta·NAK). This is an acronym based upon the first letter of Hebrew words for the three sections of the Jewish Bible: תּוֹרָה (to·RAH, Torah, Pentateuch), נְבִיאִים (ne·vi·IM, Prophets) and כְּתוּבִים (ke·tu·VIM, Writings).

Tav

The first letter in תַּנ"ךְ is the ת (tav), a new letter in our series of Hebrew Nuggets. It is the twenty-second and last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and it has the numerical value of 400. In our system of transliteration it is represented by t.

There is a dot in the middle of the tav in תַּנ"ךְ. In Hebrew written with vowel signs you may find dots in any of the letters except א (A·lef), ה (het), ו (V·yin), and ר (resh). However, these dots do not affect pronunciation and can be ignored except in the case of three letters: ב (bet / vet), which we have already learned, and two letters which we have yet to learn, כ (kaf / kaf) and פ (pe / fe).

Torah

The ת in the acronym תַּנ"ךְ (ta·NAK) stands for תּוֹרָה (to·RAH, in the sense of Pentateuch). The word תּוֹרָה appears 208 times in the Hebrew Scriptures in the singular and another twelve times in the plural, תּוֹרוֹת (to·ROT).

In English versions of the Hebrew Scriptures, to·RAH has usually been translated as “law.” The *King James Version*, for instance, mechanically translated to·RAH as “law” in every instance but one (II Sam. 7:19), which was translated “manner.” This is very misleading since to·RAH rarely has the meaning of “law” in the Hebrew Scriptures, but is generally used in the sense of “instruction.” Its meaning of the five books of Moses was developed after the Hebrew Scriptures had been written but before the time of Jesus.

The misinterpretation of to·RAH has often supported the calumny that Judaism is mere-

ly a religion of legalism. The Jewish Publication Society of America's *The Holy Scriptures*, completed in 1982, has correctly translated to·RAH as “Teaching,” “teachings,” “instructions,” “directions,” “ritual” and “obligation,” but almost never “law.” When Jesus said, “Not one yod or even one ‘thorn’ of a yod will pass from the Torah” (Mt. 5:18), he was referring to God's to·RAH or “instruction” given to Moses at Mt. Sinai (see Lesson One). When to·RAH refers in Scripture to the instructions given by God to man, as it often does, this is not a matter of laws and commandments, but instructions for living a life of blessing and joy. A loving creator gave his creation guidelines for a whole way of life.

Hebrew Abbreviations

Most Hebrew words are composed of three-letter roots, and many words consist of just three letters. To allow a three-letter abbreviation to be pronounced as if it were a word, some vowels must be added, and it is very common to add a pa·TAH under each of the first two letters.

We therefore find a pa·TAH, pronounced like the “a” in the word father, under the first two letters of תַּנ"ךְ. In our system of transliteration this vowel is represented by the letter “a.” The first syllable in the word תַּנ"ךְ (ta·NAK), then, is תַּ, pronounced ta.

The double slash mark after the second letter of תַּנ"ךְ is the sign used in Hebrew for an abbreviation. Only one slash is used to signify a one-letter abbreviation.

Jewish Years

Jewish years are also written as acronyms. This year, from September 20, 1990 to September 8, 1991 is the 5,751st year since the creation of the world according to the Jewish calendar. This is represented by letters whose numerical value equals 751 (5,000 being understood): ת (400), ש (300), נ (50) and א (1).

In speech, the year 5751 can be referred to as ת (tav), ש (shin), נ (nun), א (A·lef) or, by adding vowel signs, as תַּשָּׁנָא (tash·NA). JP



Parables & Foundations

by David Bivin

One of the many interesting results of synoptic research is the discovery of parallels between rabbinic literature and the synoptic Gospels.

Rabbinic parallels enhance our understanding of the sayings of Jesus, and vice versa. Jesus' parable below is more understandable when compared with its rabbinic parallels, and the rabbinic sayings are illuminated by Jesus' parable.

Jesus was not the only ancient sage to teach with parables. Nor was he the only sage to speak of "two kinds of foundations," the theme that good deeds are necessary along with knowledge. Many sages expressed this theme straightforwardly.

Rabbinic Parallels

Hanina ben Dosa, who taught around the middle of the first century A.D., said: "He who has more deeds than knowledge, his knowledge endures; but he who has more knowledge than deeds, his knowledge does not endure" (Mishnah, Avot 3:10).

Stones and Mud

The same idea is presented more elaborately in the following parable attributed to Elisha ben Avuyah (circa 120 A.D.):

"A person in whom there are good deeds and who has studied Torah extensively, what is he like? A man who builds first [of] stones and then afterwards [of] mud bricks. Even if a large quantity of water were to collect beside the stones, it would not destroy them. But a person in whom there are not good deeds, though he has studied Torah, what is he like? A man who builds first [of] mud bricks and then afterwards [of] stones. Even if only a little water collects, it immediately undermines them" (Avot de-Rabbi Natan 24, Version A).

Cup and Base

The simile of a cup is used to convey the same theme in another parable ascribed to Elisha ben Avuyah:

"A person in whom there are good deeds and who has studied Torah extensively, what is he like? A cup that has a base. But a person in whom there are not good deeds and who has studied Torah extensively, what is he like? A cup that has no base. When the cup is filled it falls on its side and all its contents are spilled" (Avot de-Rabbi Natan 24, Version A).

Branches and Roots

Anyone familiar with Jesus' parables will see how similar they are to those quoted above. Let us look at two more parables, one by Eleazar ben Azariah, who was active at the end of the first century A.D., and one from the Gospels by Jesus:

"A person whose knowledge is greater than his deeds, what is he like? A tree whose branches are many but whose roots are few: the wind comes

and uproots and overturns it. But a person whose deeds are greater than his knowledge, what is he like? A tree whose branches are few but whose roots are many: even if all the winds were to come and blow against it, they could not move it" (Mishnah, Avot 3:18).

Bedrock and Sand

Jesus' parable in Matthew 7:24–27 presents this theme in much the same way:

"A person who hears these words of mine and does them, what is he like? A wise man who builds his house on bedrock: the rain comes down, the rivers overflow, the winds blow and buffet the house, yet it does not collapse because it has its foundations on bedrock. But a person who hears these words of mine and does not do them, what is he like? A foolish man who builds his house on sand: the rain comes down, the rivers overflow, the winds blow and buffet the house, and it collapses in total ruin." **JP**

Transliteration Key

Hebrew & Aramaic

Consonants

א	— a (silent)
ב	— b
ג	— g
ד	— d
ה	— h (or silent)
ו	— v
ז	— z
ח	— h (voiceless guttural)
ט	— t
י	— y (or silent)
כ	— k
ך	— k (like ch in the Scottish loch)
ל	— l
מ	— m
נ	— n
ס	— s
ע	— e (voiced guttural)

פ	— p
ף	— f
צ	— ts (like ts in nets)
ק	— k
ר	— r
ש	— sh
ס	— s
ת	— t

*The form of the letter at the end of a word.

Vowels

(The **א** is used here as a point of reference.)

א — a (like a in father; rarely like o in bone)

א — a (like a in father)

א — e (like e in net, or e in hey, or somewhere in between)

ס, נ	— e (like e in net)
ס, נ	— i (like i in ski)
ס, נ, נ	— o (like o in bone)
ס, נ	— u (like u in flu)
ס	— e (silent, or as short as e in happening, or as long as e in net)

Diphthongs

ס	— ai
ס	— oi
ס	— ui

Greek

Greek words are transliterated according to the Society of Biblical Literature system.

first Christians were Jews and undoubtedly rested on the seventh day, Saturday. Because it was the only day when they did not work, it was also the most convenient for meetings. However, these meetings may have been after sundown on Saturday, in other words on the first day of the week.

I feel that, according to the Bible, God expects us to rest one day out of seven. He also expects us to meet together regularly, although a particular day of the week is not specified. My personal view is that, although there is no precedent in Scripture, it is not a bad idea to set aside at least one day a week when we consciously rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus.

— Ray Pritz

Book Review

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to help the user see the words and concepts with which the particular entry is used. Contextualized English translations for Aramaic citations are given.

Sokoloff states in his introduction: "For the rare lexemes, all the references are usually quoted, except when the word appears repeatedly in a stereotyped usage." This means the dictionary goes a long way toward being a concordance. There is also an index of 223 pages listing all the citations of the dictionary entries in the order of source text. A person reading one of these texts can immediately know which words have a citation in the dictionary and under which spelling.

All in all, this is a magnificent new tool for anyone interested in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic.

— Randall Buth

Suggested Discussion Questions

1. Should Christians observe the Sabbath? Can you think of spiritual benefits this practice might have? What day, if any, should be chosen as a day of rest? Is it important for all believers to observe the same day of the week? Does "gathering together," with all the preparation involved, seem appropriate for a day of rest? What sort of rest does the Bible seem to suggest for the Sabbath?
2. How would replacing "Judeans" or "Pharisees" for "Jews" in Gospel accounts change your interpretation of the passages? How would it affect your understanding of Jesus' relationship with his Jewish contemporaries?
3. The Essene commentaries found at Qumran assign specific events and personalities to biblical prophecies. Is this a valid practice? What are the pitfalls of this way of interpreting the Bible?
4. Jesus frequently used parables to convey his message. How should we communicate spiritual truths to our contemporaries? Can you create your own modern parables? Are there any specific media that should — or should not — be used to express what you know about God?
5. How can study be balanced with good works? Is this an important principle for us today? To what extent should this be done?

For information about how you can start or join a synoptic discussion group, please write to Synoptic Discussion Groups, International Synoptic Society, P.O. Box 31822, 91317 Jerusalem, Israel.

Readers' Perspective

(continued from page 2)

sundown on Saturday evening. Or it could be that Luke was going by Roman reckoning, and that the meeting was on Sunday night. The Greek text may give us a clue. Luke uses a very Jewish phrase, "one of the Sabbath." This could reflect the Hebrew idiom *יְמֵי הַשַּׁבָּת* (*e-HAD ba-sha-BAT*), which means "day one of the Sabbath or week." ("Sabbath" can mean either "Saturday" or "week.") Luke uses the same phrase when speaking of the women going to the tomb after Jesus had risen (Lk. 24:1; see "How Long Was Jesus in the Tomb?" *JP*, May 1988).

Other than this, Sunday is rarely mentioned in the New Testament. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to collect a certain amount from their weekly earnings on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2), but there is no mention of a meeting. The only other hint comes in Revelation 1:10, where John says he "was in the spirit on the Lord's day." The word he uses, which is unique in the New Testament to describe a day, is *κυριακός* (*kyriakos*), from which, by the way, the English word "church" ultimately derives. Post-New Testament Greek literature regularly uses this word to speak of Sunday, but once again its use in the New Testament is no indication of a regular meeting.

We must be careful to maintain a distinction between a day of meeting and a day of rest. Sunday became a day of meeting fairly early in church history (*Didache* 14), even if it was not one in New Testament times. Already in the early second century Ignatius explained that Sunday should be honored as the day of Jesus' resurrection and should be a day of rejoicing (*Magnesians* 9), and Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, connected it with the first day of creation — both the creation described in Genesis and the new creation brought about through the resurrection of the Messiah (*First Apology* 67).

Sunday was not spoken of as a day of rest until three hundred years after the time of Jesus. The

International Synoptic Society

The International Synoptic Society supports the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research by serving as a vehicle through which interested individuals can participate in the School's research.

The Society raises financial support for publication of the Jerusalem School's research, such as the *Jerusalem Synoptic Commentary*; facilitates informal discussion groups focusing on the synoptic Gospels; sponsors student research assistants and other volunteers who work with the Jerusalem School.

Annual membership in the Society is: Regular US\$100–\$300; Fellow \$300–\$500; Sponsor \$500–\$1000; Patron \$1000–5000; Lifetime membership \$5000 and over. Membership dues can be paid in monthly or quarterly installments, and in any currency.

Members of the Society are entitled to unique privileges such as pre-publication releases of *Commentary* materials and free subscription to JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE. They also receive a beautiful certificate of membership, and three times each year a Hebrew reconstruction and English translation of one of the stories in the conjectured biography of Jesus. Major publications of the Jerusalem School will be inscribed with Society members' names.

Checks should be made payable to "Jerusalem School" and designated "ISS." Members in the United States can receive a tax-deductible receipt by sending their dues via the Jerusalem School's U.S. affiliates: Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, P.O. Box 293040, Dayton, OH 45429; or Centre for the Study of Biblical Research, P.O. Box 5922, Pasadena, CA 91117.

Synoptic Discussion Groups

Individuals who are interested in the continuing research of the Jerusalem School may augment their studies by participating in a synoptic discussion group coordinated by the Synoptic Society.

These groups meet regularly to exchange views on current research presented in JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE. In addition, a group may decide to learn Hebrew together, share study resources or pursue its own Gospel investigations.

Attendance is open to everyone. Since the discussion groups are not formally linked to the International Synoptic Society, membership in the Society is not a requirement for attending or leading a group.

This issue's Suggested Discussion Questions can be found on page 15.

The Jerusalem School

The Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research (מכון ירושלים לחקר התנ"כיים הסיופטיים) is a consortium of Jewish and Christian scholars who are studying Jesus' sayings within the context of the language and culture in which he lived. Their work confirms that Jesus was a Jewish sage who taught in Hebrew and used uniquely rabbinic teaching methods.

The Jerusalem School scholars believe the first narrative of Jesus' life was written in Hebrew, and that it can be successfully recovered from the Greek texts of the synoptic Gospels. The School's central objective is to retrieve the original biography of Jesus. This is an attempt to recover a lost document from the Second Temple period, a Hebrew scroll which, like so much Jewish literature of

the period, has been preserved only in Greek.

As a means to its objective, the Jerusalem School is creating a detailed commentary on the synoptic Gospels which will reflect the renewed insight provided by the School's research. Current research of Jerusalem School members and others is presented in the pages of JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE, the School's official voice.

The Jerusalem School was registered in Israel as a non-profit research institute in 1985. Its members are Prof. David Flusser, Dr. Robert L. Lindsey, Prof. Shmuel Safrai, David Bivin, Dr. Randall J. Buth, R. Steven Notley, Dwight A. Pryor, Halvor Ronning, Mirja Ronning, Chana Safrai and Dr. Bradford H. Young.

